

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U. S. A.

Price \$1.00 per year or ten cents a copy.

Ad. rates—1c per word. 25c per inch (about 30 words), Quarter page \$1.00.

Half page \$1.75, Full page \$3.00. Display adverts., 50c per inch.

Four consecutive insertions for the price of three.

Vol. VII

October, 1938

No. 79

THE FIRST NICK CARTER

By Harold C. Holmes

The Old Detective's Pupil; or, The Mysterious Crime of Madison Square, By the Author of "The American Marquis; or, A Detective For Vengeance." (John R. Coryel.)

Thus read the title of the New York Weekly, Volume 41, No. 46, dated September 18, 1886. I can hardly claim to have read this story when issued as I was just four months old, but I sure enjoyed it when I read the story 52 years later. To read of Nick's father, his meeting with Ethel and the adventures on his first case was a real thrill. The title page of the first issue contained a picture 13 x 7 divided into four unequal parts so we have really four pictures instead of one. The second issue contained four pictures each about 3½ x 3. These pictures, no doubt fine examples of drawings of 1886, sure look stilted in 1938.

The story opens with Banker Gerald Livingston asking Inspector Byrnes of the New York police for help to locate his missing daughter, Mable. The Inspector directs him to seek the services of Sim Carter as the banker will not stand for any publicity which must necessarily accompany work by the regular police.

On Tenth Street near Second Avenue lived Sim Carter. He owned the house and rented out the 1st and 2nd floors and reserved the upper two floors as a home for himself and his only child, a son now nearly 20 years old, Nicholas Carter. Nick's mother had died when he was an infant. Sim having ample means had not been very active in detective work for sev-

eral years, devoting himself solely to the task of preparing Nick with every bit of knowledge possible to equip him to carry on as a detective with even greater success than that had by his father.

Mr. Livingston comes to this house but Sim Carter is not interested and about to refuse the case when Nick asks his father that this case be assigned to him as the first one he had ever had alone. Sim agrees. Nick finds out from Mr. Livingston that at the time his daughter disappeared \$100,000 also vanished from the safe in the library of his home. This money was in \$1,000 bills. Nick goes to the Livingston mansion on Madison Square. Obtains a photo of Mable and finds she was engaged to a man named Ralph Moreland. He goes to the 17th National Bank and finds that one of the 1,000 bills had been changed there and the paying teller identifies Mable from the picture of her that Nick had, as the person who presented the bill. Upon leaving the bank Nick sees Mable on the street and follows her to a nearby tenement house. Following into the room Mable had entered, she has mysteriously disappeared. A big thug named Bill who had shadowed Nick comes in. Nick knocks him out and finds a note on him saying "Danger. They have got Sim Carter on the case." Nick goes to see Ralph Moreland and is convinced that Ralph is holding back information.

Nick goes home. Old Sim Carter cooks a meal for Nick and himself while Nick is assuming the disguise of a German woman. Nick tells his father he puts little faith in the clues he has now as they came too easy.

Looks like a "plant." Nick goes to the tenement house next to that in which Mable had disappeared and pretending to be looking for a rent finds a secret passage from that building into the next building, into the room in which Mable had disappeared. He goes through into this room and is confronted by the thug Bill and a very beautiful young woman. Though Nick did not know it then, this was the most important moment he had ever known as he was looking for the first time at the girl who was later to become Mrs. Ethel Carter. Nick deceives them so that he gets out and goes home. Nick removes his disguise. He has been shadowed home so his father goes out first to lead the shadow astray and Nick leaves later and goes to Ralph Moreland's room at 21 East 15th Street. Tells Ralph he has been deceived and that notes he thought he had been receiving from Mable were forgeries.

Nick goes home and as he ascends the stairs he is struck by a feeling of impending misfortune. It was only too true. He finds his father dead on the floor. Murdered. Nick goes to Inspector Byrne and tells him what has happened and asks he be allowed to bring the murderers to justice himself.

In a saloon opposite the tenement house where he had lost Mable, by questioning the owner he finds that the janitor of this tenement house is a woman named Waldron and that the beautiful girl he had seen there was this woman's daughter who was an actress in the show at Niblo's Gardens. They being out, Nick picklocks their door and finds proof that this girl was the one who impersonated Mable and changed the \$1,000 bill at the bank.

A little later Nick conceals himself in another room and overhears a meeting of four of the crooks. The thug, Bill, and a smaller man who murdered Nick's father, and two others, a man named Gilbert and one named Mansfield. Nick steals a letter from an overcoat hanging in the room which later proved to have great bearing on the plot. It read

Dear Jane—

You have saved my honor. Do not let the child live to rise up in witness against me.

G. D.

Nick overhears that Mable is to be moved from the place where they have her at present to a house on 43rd St. Mrs. Waldron comes in and tells them not to let Ethel know any more about the plot as she thinks

Ethel might even betray them to the police. This is the first time the reader is given Ethel Waldron's first name. Nick gets out and notifies Ralph Moreland to be ready to take Mable to the home of his (Ralph's) aunt in Brooklyn for safety as Nick expects to rescue her when the crooks attempt transferring her from one location to the house on 43rd Street. This Nick is able to do after an exciting time of it. But after Mable reaches this place of safety in Brooklyn she refuses to give Nick any information at all. She absolutely refuses to go home to her parents.

Nick and Ralph Moreland take a room together on University Place. Nick attends the funeral of his father. During the rescue of Mable, Nick had captured the crook Mansfield and left him bound in Moreland's room. When Nick goes there to question him he is followed by Bill and Dave, the two crooks who killed his father, and is overpowered by them, bound hand and foot, the gas turned on and he is left to die by suffocation. Is rescued from certain death by Ethel Waldron. Ethel then pleads with him to pursue the gang no further as Bill is her father. Nick, torn between admiration of his fair rescuer and desire to avenge his father, makes no final decision. Removes his disguise so Ethel sees him as himself for the first time, and he escorts her to her home.

Later, he sees Mrs. Livingston in the vicinity and shadows her. She goes into the tenement house and up to the room with the secret passage. Nick follows and finds Ethel there listening at the mantel to the conversation of the crooks in the other room. Ethel whispers to Nick to go and she will see him at 10:00 a.m. next morning in Union Square, as she has much to tell him; she has learned from what she just overheard that she is not the daughter of the crook, Bill. The crooks came into the room before Nick could get out, but they do not know him as they never saw him before except when he wore a disguise and Ethel passes him off as a boy friend.

Nick goes to his rooms and finds Ralph Moreland there. Ralph says he knows that Mrs. Livingston's maiden name was Somers and that she came from the little town of Drayton, near Cayuga Lake in New York State. Nick sends Ralph there to learn what he can about Mrs. Livingston's early life.

At 10:00 next morning Nick is in Union Square to keep his appointment with Ethel. She had not come by

10:30. Nick goes to the house and is told that the whole Waldron family left about 6:00 a.m. but their destination was unknown. Nick picklocks way into the Waldron apartment and finds a note to him from Ethel, saying that she was being treated like a prisoner and was to be taken away somewhere and that she would write to him at General Delivery Station D in name of Samuel J. Johnson, if she were able to do so.

Later that day Nick went to his rooms. As he entered the door he ducked and leaped to one side. It was well he did as a slug shot whizzed past his head. It was the two crooks, Bill and Dave. Nick knocks Bill out. Dave escapes. Nick shadows him, through 14th Street to the 6th Avenue El Station. Then on an uptown train to High Bridge. Across the bridge and over the hill. To the right about a quarter of a mile, up a lane and to an apparently abandoned house set in large grounds. Through a window Nick sees the crooks and from their actions thinks that they have decided to put Ethel out of the way. Nick goes around the house and finds the room Ethel is in. Climbs up to it. Ethel is trying to bar the door but the crooks burst in, Gilbert with a knife clutched in his hand. There are bars on the window so that Nick cannot get in but with his revolver he covers the crooks and forces them to lie face down on the floor. (Note A at end of article.) Nick gives his handcuffs to Ethel and tells her to cuff the two crooks. As she goes to do this, Nick who has paid too much attention to the inside of the room and not enough to the outside is yanked from his perch by two hands which grasp his ankles. As he falls to the ground, all lights in the house go out and Ethel screams in terror. Nick runs to front of house and gets in through a window. But every person in the house has mysteriously disappeared.

The next morning at General Delivery Station D Nick gets a letter from Ethel, saying she made her escape and is at the home of a kind old lady, named Mrs. Ross, a little south of High Bridge, and asks Nick to come to her. You may be sure Nick loses no time doing so. On arriving there Nick finds that Ethel is gone. She had been lured from this security only an hour before by a woman who came and told her that Nick had been seriously injured and was calling for Ethel to come to him. Ethel had left with this woman.

Discouraged Nick goes home. Finds

there a letter from Ralph Moreland from Drayton, N. Y. He had no trouble in getting the story of Mrs. Livingston's early life. Mrs. Livingston had been born Gertrude Somers and had had an inseparable girl companion, Jane Manning. This latter girl had gone to New York for one winter and when she returned she announced her engagement to the son of a very wealthy family, a Mr. Henry Dalton. This Mr. Dalton came to Drayton and the two girls were his companions on all occasions. But as sometimes happens Dalton transferred his affections to Gertrude Somers. On the surface this had appeared to make almost no difference in the feelings of either girl for the other. Dalton was taken mysteriously sick and in spite of the best medical care, died at the Somers's residence. Later, the two girls went to New York and the townspeople heard later that Gertrude Somers had married a man named Gerald Livingston. Jane Manning was never heard of again.

Next day Nick finds out the plotters are to meet in a room over a certain saloon. He secretes himself in an adjoining room and overhears the gang telling that the attack on Ethel in the High Bridge house was a fake and that the juring of Ethel from the home of Mrs. Ross was more fake and in the words of the story, "That sap detective never knew it was planned that way by Ethel." The true facts of the case were that it was this meeting of the crooks that was the fake. The clue to the knowledge of the impending meeting had been planted on Nick and they knew that he was in the next room listening. Its purpose was to play upon Nick's affection for Ethel, hoping that Nick would think her guilty and to spare having to arrest her and seeing her sent to prison, would lay off the whole case. Nick did not know these facts till much later, and was heart-broken at what he had overheard, but will never believe Ethel guilty till she has admitted it to him herself.

The next morning Nick writes to Ralph Moreland to come home from Drayton. Through Kitty, a maid in the Livingston home, Nick learns that Mrs. Livingston is going to Philadelphia to meet Mrs. Gilbert, the wife of one of the crooks. Nick, believing that this Mrs. Gilbert was the woman who lured Ethel from the security of Mrs. Ross's home, shadows her to Philadelphia. After Mrs. Livingston leads him to Mrs. Gilbert, Nick keeps out of sight till Mrs. Gilbert is alone. Then

he confronts her, tells her that only disaster can be the final fate of the gang, and offers her \$10,000 to restore Ethel to him, and to make a clean breast of the plot of the gang and the reason for the plot which is really a greater mystery than the crime itself, which so far has been the robbery of the \$100,000 from Mr. Livingston and the apparent senseless attacks on different people and the kidnapping of Mable Livingston. Mrs. Gilbert agrees and takes Nick to a room where Ethel should be but only to find she has gone. She left a note telling Mrs. Gilbert she had gone to New York to find her protector. Mrs. Gilbert reveals the plot. Mrs. Livingston is in Mrs. Waldron's power as when both were young. Mrs. Livingston murdered a child born to her. Mrs. Waldron hates her and is out to make her suffer as much as she can. Mr. Mansfield is Mrs. Waldron's son. Ethel is really Mr. and Mrs. Livingston's daughter. Mable Livingston is only a foundling. Mrs. Waldron stole Ethel from her real mother and substituted Mable in her place, intending to bring up Ethel to a life of crime and dissipation to shame and disgrace her mother who could not speak out owing to her early crime. But Mrs. Waldron had never been able to corrupt Ethel.

Nick goes back to New York. Next morning in Union Square Nick sees a young couple just entering the Park from 4th Avenue. It is Ethel with the crook Mansfield. Nick goes up to them. Ethel shows the greatest joy at seeing Nick again. Nick is cool toward her at seeing her with this man known to be a crook. Ethel reminds him that up to a day or so before she had always thought Mansfield to be her blood brother, and that now she had induced Mansfield to tell everything to Nick that he knows about the plot. Nick tells Mansfield to lead the way to the rooms occupied by Ralph Moreland and Nick on the left side of University Place. Nick and Ethel don't get on any too well. Nick is very stern and Ethel is near to tears. She accuses Nick of being cruel to her. Nick then tells her that he has grown to love her, but that evidence upon evidence has piled up to shake his faith in her. Ethel is very indignant and tells Nick that for him to believe for an instant that she was such a vile person as he pictured her was proof that his love was a very false thing, and that she scorned to try to justify herself in his eyes. Arriving at the room Mansfield tells his story. Part, is

as Mrs. Gilbert told Nick; part, is not. Ethel is not Mrs. Waldron's child, neither is she Mrs. Livingston's. Mansfield does not know who her parents were. Mansfield says that Ethel has been innocent of any wrong doing, even her impersonation of Mable in the cashing of the 1,000 bill having been brought about by deceit.

Mansfield leaves and there is an interesting scene between Nick and Ethel. Nick is conscience stricken at ever having doubted Ethel and he eats humble pie in big chunks. But it ends as we would have it in complete understanding and declared love between the two. It is here that Ethel for the first time learns Nick's name as she has known him only as Mr. Johnson. Nick takes Ethel to stay with Mable in Brooklyn. Nick goes to Mrs. Livingston and gives her the first good news she has had in years, but giving up to her the incriminating letter she had once written to Jane Manning as Nick is convinced that she did not murder a child.

That night Nick shadows Bill and Dave the crooks to the tenement house where so much action in this story occurs, but is too late to prevent a tragedy. Mansfield is killed for revealing information to Nick. Mrs. Waldron, his mother, in trying to save him is mortally wounded. She tries to reveal to Nick the secret of Ethel's parentage, but dies before she can do so. Nick finds on her body a diary written in cipher. This he takes to Mrs. Livingston who can read it. Mrs. Waldron, the former Jane Manning had written it in a cipher that she and Mrs. Livingston had used as girls just for amusement in writing to each other.

The diary explains and brings great happiness to Mrs. Livingston. When Henry Dalton had transferred his love to Gertrude Somers, Jane Manning had never forgiven it. She had killed Dalton by poison and given Mrs. Livingston the information that her baby was dead. This was false. Her baby lived and it is Ethel. Ethel Waldron no longer, but Ethel Dalton. Also Mable is the real child of the Livingstons and Ethel's half-sister. She had only pretended to exchange the babies to bring grief of mind to Mrs. Livingston. Nick leaves to bring her two children to her, Ethel and Mable.

Nick arranges a trap for the conspirators and all are captured. Bill and Dave are executed. Mr. Gilbert commits suicide. Nick sees Inspector Byrnes and tells him of the completion of the case. Byrnes tries to get him to join his detective force, but

Nick says he is resolved to work as his father did, independently.

Nick brings the two girls to the Livingston mansion on Madison Square. They are rapturously greeted by Mr. Livingston as well as by his wife. Grateful, Mr. and Mrs. Livingston tell Nick that outside of his money charge for his services, they will stop at nothing to show their gratitude. Nick says he wants nothing. The only thing he wants he would not accept as a reward. Ethel said, "Anything worth having is worth asking for." Mable smilingly led Ethel over to Nick and placed her hand in his. Mr. and Mrs. Livingston found nothing but pleasure in the love of their newly found daughter for this handsome, manly detective.

So ended Nick's first case. Out of much trouble had come much happiness and Nick's only regret was that his father could not have lived to see the outcome of this first case and to know that Nick had won the hand of such a beautiful and courageous girl as Ethel Dalton for his wife.

This story was never reprinted in Nick Carter Weekly nor Nick Carter Stories, but was reprinted twice in New Magnet Library, Nos. 10 and 954. And best of all the Magnet reprints were not abridged, and also all but two of the original pictures unchanged were reprinted. The title of the New Magnet Library 954 was *The Old Detective's Pupil; or, On the Side of Law and Order*. The story in the New York Weekly ran for 13 issues.

Note A: This scene was used for the drawing for the outside picture cover of New Magnet 954, and was new not being one of the illustrations from New York Weekly.

Notice the note I quoted in full in first of this article, the "Dear Jane" note. Put a comma after the word "witness," and it reads as Gertrude Somers meant it. As my child grows up do not poison her mind to think ill of her mother. Instead put a comma after the word "live," and it means murder. Jane Manning falsely stated that she had killed the baby at the mother's instigation and held the note over Mrs. Livingston's head all those years.

The End

DIME NOVELS NOT BAD

To the Editor of The New York Times:

The communication in The Times, "In Praise of Half-Dime Novels," was interesting but misleading. I never read them and they may have been all the writer claims for them.

But the original "dime novels" — "yellow - covered literature" — were not the "soul destroyers of youth" that were so considered by our elders in the '60s. In fact, the first dime novel was reprinted by the author, Edward S. Ellis, in 1907 — in cloth and illustrated — and is a perfectly innocuous and interesting novel, full of action and extravagant adventures, a worthy addition to any library for the young. The title is "Seth Jones."

Dime novels first appeared in 1859, but it was not till about 1863 that they were advertised or generally known. In that year there appeared on billboards and railroad ways a strip called in those days a "dodger," bearing the simple legend, "Who is Seth Jones?" After some months there appeared a cut of a trapper, in full costume, with the tag, "I am Seth Jones," and thus the first dime novel was announced.

JAMES B. RUSSELL.

Lowell, Mass., Jan. 14, 1931.

KIRK MUNROE AND HIS BOOKS FOR BOYS

Boys of an older generation, and probably many of the present day will recall the name of Kirk Munroe, who has just passed away at an advanced age. He was one of those prolific writers like Oliver Optic, Horatio Alger, Jr., and Frank Castleman, who, either under these or other names, turned out a steady stream of books for boys that were read with eager interest in all parts of the country. Each of these had his special field in the world of juvenile literature; and none of them wrote anything that was not wholesome and stimulating. Their names are still remembered by gray-haired men who found profit and entertainment in reading their books.

Kirk Munroe confined himself chiefly to stories of travel, exploration and adventure. He wrote on topics with which he was most familiar, and for that reason he was successful. Those who aspire to write, either for children or adults, might do well to bear this in mind. Munroe began his adventurous career early in life when he crossed the American Continent in 1867, during which he helped to lay out the routes of the Santa Fe and Northern Pacific Railroads. It was during this time that he came to know Kit Carson and Colonel William F. Cody.

But Mr. Munroe wrote chiefly about Florida when the State was not as well known as it is today. "Through Swamp and Glade" told of his explorations. His "Flamingo Feather" was probably his best known work, but he

published a score of others which caught the youthful fancy. Basing his fiction on facts, he won an enviable place in his own field; and many readers in all sections of America will learn of his death with a feeling of regret.

PARTIAL LIST OF 1938 MEMBERS

- Nos.
70. Don Brewer, P. O. Box 165, Stroudsburg, Pa.
97. Miss Delia Garrett, 121 S. Brown St., Minden, Nehr. (New Member.)
98. Miss Grace Burgess, 121 University St., South, Vermillion, S. Dakota. (New Member.)
99. Miss Gladys Leonard, 101 University St., South, Vermillion, S. Dak. (New Member.)
100. John V. Johnson, R. F. D. 1, Box 35, Warwick, N. Dak. (New Member.)

Note:

We have four new members above, and three of them are women, who are very much interested in the collecting and preservation of our old libraries and story papers of by-gone days, also in the only club of its kind in America. It is fine to have a few ladies in the Brotherhood, and I'm sure you-all will get along fine with them. They love the little mag, The Roundup, too. Welcome to our H.H.B. ladies and gentlemen.

Bro. Chas. H. Austin wishes to thank Bro. Wm. J. Benners for the information that was sent him, regarding No. 1092 of Beadles Dime Library. Bro. Austin's list of Beadles Dime Library is now complete.

EDITORIAL

Dear Brothers and Subscribers: Have just got back from another trip to Philadelphia, to be with our sick friend, Bro. Benners. Some days he is worse than others. I've been cheering him up all I could, and I've seen some improvement, although Pilly is in a very bad way; what I mean, his health is very poor, but, he's trying to keep his head above water, as much as he can, and sometimes we-all find it a very hard thing to do. I managed to get him to come up east with me, but as he has to get back to the hospital I'm afraid he will not be able to stay very long, although I would like to have him stay two or three weeks, or longer, if he could. On our way from Philadelphia to Fisherville, we stopped off over night in New York, and we went out and visited Bro. P. C.

Maroske at Woodside, Long Island, and saw some of his collection, and he had some dandies, too. Such as Beadles Boys, large and small, Nickels, Dimes and Half Dimes, Old Caps and many others, it sure made my mouth water when I saw them. And such nice shape, too. Now to go back a little, when I went down to Philadelphia, Ray Caldwell was up here from Lancaster, Pa., and stopped off to see me on a Thursday night, and I asked him when he was going back, as he was on his way up to Portsmouth, N.H., or Maine, if I'm not mistaken, and he said he had to be home Sunday night, and asked if I would like to go back with him, and I said, yes, as he had an idea that I was going back; so, when he came back, I had a chance to ride to Philadelphia with Ray and his wife. Ray was up to Old Orchard Beach, Maine, and tried to locate Bro. Ralph Smith, but was disappointed, as he couldn't be found. Too bad, as I'm sure they'd loved to have met each other. Better luck next time, fellows. Yes, and Ray brought me right to Bro. Benners' door; that's a friend for you, and I thank Ray ever so much; and I sure hope I can return the kindness some day. I am way behind with the Roundup, but you'll be getting two instead of one, the September and October issues, and will try to have the other out on time. More anon.

—Reckless Ralph.

Last month I advertised that I had over

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and I still have lots of them. Mail has been coming long after collectors have written to me on account of an error in my address. All mail goes to Canton, Illinois. So you see it takes some time before I get it.

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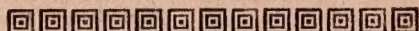
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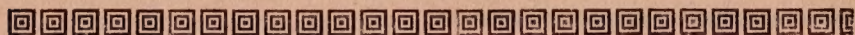
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N.Y. Weekly, Vol. xxx, No. 1, Nov. 11, 1874
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